

The Critic

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Authors at Home.* IV.

DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES IN BEACON STREET.†

Books there are in this library, of course ; but you are as little conscious of the books as you are of the world. You are only really conscious of the presence in the room, and the big desk on which is lying the manuscript of 'The New Portfolio.' Near the manuscript is the pen that wrote both the other portfolios, and now is writing this one. As you take it up, it is pretty to see the look that steals over Dr. Holmes's face ; it is the twinkle of a smile that seems to mean, 'Yes, it was the pen that did it !' I never could have done it in the world !' His success has given him a deep and genuine pleasure, largely due to the surprise of it. At forty-six he believed he had done all that could be expected of him, and he was content to rest his reputation—as well he might—on those earlier poems which will always make a part of even his latest fame. But the greater fame which followed was—not greatness thrust upon him, for genius such as his is something more than the patience which is sometimes genius,—but certainly greatness *dragged out of him*. The editors of the proposed *Atlantic* insisted that he should write for it. The Doctor did not yield, till, as he himself tells it, with another twinkling smile, they invited him to a 'convincing dinner at Parker's.' Feeling very good-natured immediately after the dinner, he promised to 'try,' and a little later sent off a few sheets which he somewhat dubiously hoped would 'do.' The storm of greeting and applause that followed even these first sheets filled him with amazement, but with a genuine delight. It is beautiful to see how deeply it touches him to know that thousands of readers think 'The Autocrat' the most charming book they own. For this is not the arrogant satisfaction of the 'master' who announces : 'Listen ! I have composed the most wonderful sonata that the world has ever heard !' Still less is it the senseless arrogance of a foolish violin that might say : 'Listen ! you shall hear from me the most superb music you can imagine !' Rather is it the low-voiced, wondering content of an aeolian harp, that, lying quietly upon the window-sill, with no thought that it is there for anything but to enjoy itself, suddenly finds wonderful harmonies stealing through its heart and out into the world, and sees a group of gladdened listeners gathering about it. 'How wonderful ! how wonderful that I have been chosen to give this music to the world ! Am I not greatly to be envied ?' As the harp thus breathes its gratitude to the breeze that stirs it, so Dr. Holmes looks his gratitude to the pen that 'helped' him ; with something of that same wonder at personal success that made Thackeray exclaim : 'Down on your knees, my boy ! That is the house where I wrote "Vanity Fair !"' Do we not all love Thackeray and Holmes the better for caring so much about our caring for them ?

But it is growing late and dark. Across the river—one almost says across the bay—the lights are twinkling, and we must go. As Dr. Holmes opens the door for us, and the cool breeze touches our faces, how strange it seems to see the paved and lighted street, the crowding houses, the throng of carriages, and to realize that the great, throbbing, fashionable world has been so near to us all the afternoon while we have been so far from it !

Now as we go down the steps, and see Mr. Howells, who lives only three doors away, going up his steps, a sudden consciousness strikes us of what very pleasant places Boston literary lines seem to fall into ! Is it that literary people are more fortunate in Boston, or that in Boston only the fortunate people are literary ? For as we think of brilliant names associated with Beacon Street, Boylston Street, Commonwealth Avenue, Newbury and Marlborough Streets, it certainly seems as if the Bohemia of plain living and high thinking—so prominent a feature of New York literary and artistic life—had hardly a foothold in aristocratic, successful, literary Boston.

Finally, if it seems wonderful that living almost exclusively in one locality Dr. Holmes should have succeeded as few have succeeded in dealing with the mysteries of universal human nature, still more wonderful is it, perhaps, that dealing very largely with the foibles and follies of human nature, nothing that he has ever written has given offence. True, this is partly owing to his intense unwillingness to hurt the feelings of any human being. No fame for saying brilliant things that came to this gentlest of Autocrats and most genial of gentlemen, tinged with a possibility that any one had winced under his pen, would seem to him of any value, or give him any pleasure. But, as a matter of fact, no bore ever read anything Dr. Holmes has cleverly written about bores with the painful consciousness, 'Alas ! I was that bore !' We may take to ourselves a good deal that he says, but never with a sense of shame or humiliation. On the contrary, we laugh the most sincerely of any one, and say 'Of course ! that is exactly it ! Why, I have done that thing myself a thousand times !' And so the genial, keen-eyed master of human nature writes with impunity how difficult he finds it to love his neighbor properly till he gets away from him, and tells us how he hates to have his best friend hunt him up in the cars and sit down beside him, and explains that, though a radical, he finds he enjoys the society of those who believe more than he does better than that of those who believe less ; and neighbor and best friend, radical and conservative, laugh alike and alike enjoy the joke, each only remembering how he finds it hard to love his neighbor, and how he hates to talk in the cars. The restless 'interviewer,' who may perhaps have gained entrance to the pleasant library, will never find himself treated, after he has left, with any less courtesy than that which allowed him to be happy while he was 'interviewing,' to the misery of his hapless victim. The pen that 'never dares to be as funny as it can' never permits itself to be as witty as it might, at the expense of any suffering to others. The gentle Doctor, when the interviewer is gone, will turn again to his ducks in the beautiful aviary outside his window, and only vent his long-suffering in some general remark, thrown carelessly in as he describes how the bird

Sees a flat log come floating down the stream ;
Stares undismayed upon the harmless stranger ;—
Ah ! were all strangers harmless as they seem !

And the very latest stranger who may have inflicted the blow that drew out that gentlest of remonstrances, will be the first to laugh and to enjoy the remonstrance as a joke !

And so has come to the Autocrat what he prizes as the very best of all his fame—the consciousness that he has never made a 'hit' that could wound. So truly is this his temperament, that if you praise some of the fine lines of his noble poem on 'My Aviary,' he will say gently : 'But don't you think the best line is where I spare the feelings of the duck ?' and you remember,

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† Continued from January 10, and concluded.

Look quick ! there's one just diving !
 And while he's under—just about a minute—
 I take advantage of the fact to say
 His fishy carcase has no virtue in it,
 The gunning idiot's worthless hire to pay.

And not even 'while they are under' will Dr. Holmes ridicule his fellow-men. It is never *we* whom he is laughing at : it is simply human nature on its funny side ; and it is a curious fact that none of us resent being considered to have the foibles of human nature provided they are not made to appear personal foibles. So, while remembering ourselves the intensity of the pleasure he has given us, let us remember to tell him, what he will care far more to hear, that he has never given any of us anything *but* pleasure.

ALICE WELLINGTON ROLLINS.

Reviews

Tennyson's New Drama.*

THE TASK which the reviewer of 'Becket' has before him is not an agreeable one. His veneration for the great poet who has done so much to adorn English literature prompts him to treat the piece with a certain respect, to 'be to its faults a little blind, and to its virtues very kind.' But his exasperation at the feebleness and formlessness of the work, at its wasted opportunities for eloquence, tenderness, dramatic effect, his disappointment at finding dross where he looked for gold, speedily overcome his native mildness. Edwin Arnold in his 'Indian Idylls' has a story of a noble prince into whose body the abhorred Kali passed, possessing him utterly, and committing in his likeness a thousand evil deeds, as a punishment for the fault of entering the temple with unwashed feet. Perchance fasting and meditation might avail to drive out the evil genius that now possesses Tennyson and bids him play the dramatist—sight no whit seemlier than Hercules at the spinning-wheel.

This latest of Tennyson's dramas is destitute of plot, and is a mere chronicle of Becket's career as Archbishop, with which is interwoven—not too skilfully—the story of Fair Rosamund. The piece introduces twenty-four characters, or rather puppets, who walk, talk, make love, commit murder, with the naturalness and animation of so many Dutch dolls. Walter Map, the satirist of the clergy, is given some good lines, and there are tender touches in some of Rosamund's scenes ; but the central figure is unimpressive, even the loyalty which was the keynote of Becket's seemingly inconsistent character being rather hinted at than revealed. The prattle of Margery and little Geoffrey is inconceivably silly, and in general the author's attempts at humor are puerile to the last degree. We have seen a notice of the work in which it is gravely compared with Shakespeare. There are two points in which we have ourselves observed such a resemblance. Shakspeare had a trick of running some poor phrase until, in his own words, it was 'cracked in the wind,' and in 'Becket' such passages as

I still have cleaved to the crown, in hope the crown
 Would cleave to me that but obeyed the crown,
 Crowning your son,

are of frequent occurrence. Shakspeare has many verbal anachronisms, and in 'Becket' we find modern phrases like 'Mother, you told me a great fib.' But in other respects the comparison is preposterous. This faint and interrupted outline, these pale and inarticulate phantasms, can they recall the color and movement of Shakspeare, his sublime pathos, his robust humor, his profound wisdom ? This frigid incoherence and that impassioned eloquence, this limping fancy and yonder broad-winged imagination, are they fit peers ? Here is a truly Shakspearian line, put into the mouth of 'Becket's' assassin :

'Come ! as he said, thou art our prisoner.'

The bathos of that 'as he said !' The truth seems to be

* Becket. By Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate. New York : Macmillan & Co.

that Tennyson is losing his self-control as an artist ; his pruning-knife has grown dull, his ear uncritical. What has become of the Tennysonian rhythm in verses like these ?

You were. I never forget anything.
 I thought it was a gift ; I thought it was a gift.
 Stagger on the slope decks for any rough sea.

And in thought as well as expression the signs of decadence are visible ; the poet is content to use common clay where formerly he gave us porcelain. Yet, as 'even in our ashes live their wonted fires,' so even in 'Becket' there are fugitive gleams and echoes of the Tennyson we all have loved. Justice compels us to state that although at times the phraseology of the play may be of too modern a stamp, yet in one respect the archaic coloring is unimpeachable. 'Bishopric' and 'archbishopric' are always spelt with a final 'k.'

The Croker Papers.*

JOHN WILSON CROKER, the famous editor of Boswell's Life of Johnson, has remained long enough impaled upon the point of Macaulay's pen, in Homeric and Herodotean phrase, 'a prey to dogs and fowls of the air,' and the victim of gross and probably unparalleled misrepresentation. 'A bad, a very man,' was the judgment of the great Whig historian, pronounced with all the power of epigram and ridicule on one whose greatest crime was that he was *not* a Whig and *not* an historian. In these voluminous diaries and correspondence, unearthed and edited by Mr. Louis J. Jennings, many of us will discover for the first time that Croker was far from being a mere fly embedded in the amber of Macaulay's brilliant and caustic essay ; or a book-worm, overhanging the author whom he was editing with misshapen notes and tedious dissertations ; or a political trickster, 'a scandal alike to politics and letters.' On the contrary, we have revealed to us a singularly powerful individuality, a man who had formed innumerable friendships with the first people of his time, a scholar of rare attainments, and a politician whose influence on his contemporaries was both salutary and lasting.

Croker's long association with *The Quarterly Review* threw him into intimate relations with English politics, literature, and society, during the first half of the Nineteenth Century ; and of this he has left an invaluable picture—an 'everlasting possession'—in these memoirs. One cannot open these volumes at any page without being startled at their wealth ; such as the record of a series of conversations with the Duke of Wellington (taken down by Croker immediately after their occurrence), giving his own impressions of his battles and his opinions of Napoleon, accompanied by a large number of Wellington's letters. Fully as interesting are the personal recollections of George IV., as given by him to Croker, and the records of an intimate correspondence with Sir Robert Peel, covering thirty years of English politics. Last, but not least, the literary gleaner will find a precious collection of letters, reminiscences, and witty and pungent anecdotes, probably unequalled in literature, touching most of the notabilities of the day, such as the Disraelis, Theodore Hook, Scott, Byron, Talleyrand, Moore, Macaulay, Brougham, Guizot, and others. All this varied matter Mr. Jennings has skilfully woven together by a light but strong thread of explanatory matter, embracing biographical details and such other facts as are necessary to elucidate the text. The result is two volumes from which, as from Helen's high tower, one can view the whole Ilian plains of English and Continental affairs, from 1809 to 1859, with all their marshalled and contending hosts ; and Mr. Jennings is even more skilled than she of Argos in interpreting and illuminating for us the figures that move about and wrestle in that splendid arena.

The 'true inwardness' of the Croker-Macaulay contro-

* The Correspondence and Diaries of John Wilson Croker. Edited by Louis J. Jennings. 2 vols. \$5. New York : Charles Scribner's Sons.

versy is revealed by Mr. Jennings in the following paragraph :—' The edition of Boswell was not published until 1831. For some months previously in the House of Commons there had been several sharp encounters between Croker and Macaulay in the debates on Reform. The two men, as it has been pointed out, were to some extent "pitted" against each other, and more than once Mr. Croker gained a marked and telling advantage over his antagonist. He had greater felicity in ready reply than Macaulay, and on more than one occasion he utterly demolished an elaborately prepared and showy, but unsubstantial, speech of the "brilliant essayist." Macaulay, as it clearly appears from his own letters, was irritated beyond measure by Croker : he grew to "detest" him. Then he began casting about for some means of revenge. This would seem incredible, if he had not, almost in so many words, revealed the secret. In July, 1831, he thus wrote : "That impudent, leering Croker congratulated the House on the proof which I had given of my readiness. He was afraid, he said, that I had been silent so long on account of the many allusions which had been made to Calne. Now that I had risen again, he hoped that they should hear me often. See whether I do not dust that varlet's jacket for him in the next number of the Blue and Yellow." From this time forth he waited impatiently for his opportunity to settle his account with Mr. Croker. . . . Croker, he wrote, looks across the House of Commons at me with a leer of hatred, which I repay with a gracious smile of pity.

Here is a graphic pen-picture of the bloated King George IV. taken from Croker's diary :—' 20th September. Our King gave on Monday week one of his trumpet dinners to the officers commanding regiments, and made, as usual, a speech which was all about and *against* Louis Philippe. "They say that I follow the Citizen King. So I do—with my eye. I have my eye on all his movements. I know that our natural enemy has not changed her dislike of us. Sharpen your swords, gentlemen, for 'tis you I must depend upon to uphold the dignity and interests of Old England." Such, and even more offensive, was, I hear, his Majesty's allusion to his royal brother. I suppose it must be exaggerated, but when he begins to talk after dinner, *il prend le mors aux dents*. They add that Palmerston was by and said "Poor man, he means the Emperor of Russia." Sir Robert Peel writes :—' My dear Croker : When you come to town, go to Leicester Fields and see a picture which will interest you, and repay you for your visit, if it makes half as much impression upon you as it did upon me. It is by David, and I dare say you have already mentally ejaculated that you would not give a farthing to see any picture by so bad a painter and so great a scoundrel. But this picture, which is by far the best he ever painted, represents with horrible fidelity Marat dying in the bath after his assassination by Charlotte Corday, and was exhibited by order of the Convention. There is the pencil sketch of his countenance by David, in the agony of death, made in the bath-room on a piece of paper that David found there. The picture itself is powerfully painted.' Does not this sketch remind one of the story of Parrhasius and his slave ?

Here is a glimpse of the Queen as she appeared in 1839 reading to her eighty-three privy councillors the announcement of her intention of allying herself in marriage with Prince Albert :—' When we had assembled to the number of, I think, seventy or eighty (two to one Conservative), and as many had taken their seats as could, at a long table, Her Majesty was handed in by the Lord Chamberlain, and, bowing to us all round, sat down, saying, "Your Lordships" (we are all *Lords* at the Council Board) "will be seated." She then unfolded a paper and read her declaration, which you will, before this can reach you, have seen in the newspapers. I cannot describe to you with what a mixture of self-possession and feminine delicacy she read the paper. Her voice, which is naturally beautiful, was clear and untroubled ; and her eye was bright and calm,

neither bold nor downcast, but firm and soft. There was a blush on her cheek which made her look both handsomer and more interesting ; and certainly she *did* look as interesting and as handsome as any young lady I ever saw'

We may conclude these extracts with a delightful note from Archbishop (then Dean) Trench to Mr. Croker apropos of an examination in English literature—a note which may afford some consolation to the Archbishop's followers and imitators in literary examinations in this country :—' My dear sir : Certainly the answers of the candidates generally revealed to me a depth of ignorance, in respect of English literature, among our young men, of which I had no conception. In one of my questions I ask who were the authors of a few of the best known poems in the language. I received the following answers, which I gathered out of the papers as I read them. I was assured that the "Fairy Queen" was written by Chaucer, by Thomson ; "Canterbury Tales" by Goldsmith, Gray, Dryden ; "Comus" by Pope, Dryden, Beaumont and Fletcher ; "Absalom and Achitophel" by Milton, Hannah More, Shakespeare, Byron ; "Essay on Man," by Newton, Dryden, Burke, Milton, Locke, Swift, Prior ; "Dunciad" by Sterne, Akenside, Beaumont and Fletcher, Dryden ; "Hudibras" by Gower, Pope, Fielding, Ben Jonson, Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson ; "Task" by Coleridge, Goldsmith ; "Excursion" by Crabbe, Thomson, Tennyson, Swift, Gower, Goldsmith ; "Thalaba" by Swift, Pope, Shenstone, Cowper, Byron, Coleridge !'

Though so different in kind, this book promises to rival in popularity the admirable Life of Macaulay by Trevelyan.

Gay's "James Madison." *

THE excellent series of books on American statesmen has been so well conducted that we expect only good books to appear in it. Any volume added to the series comes to us, therefore, with a sufficient recommendation. Mr. Gay's "James Madison" does not fall behind the others, for it is an admirable study of that statesman and of the political movements in which he took part. Madison's share in the framing of the Constitution, and in settling the form of the Government of the United States, was so great, that any true and just account of it must be of interest. This part of his career Mr. Gay has described clearly and strongly, because he admires it and feels it to be important. When Madison changed his party relations, opposed Hamilton, acted as Jefferson's Secretary of State, and, becoming President, brought on a war with England against his own better judgment, Mr. Gay finds much less in him to admire, and believes he descended from being a statesman to the level of a party politician. His attitude in the latter part of his book especially is that of the critic, rather than that of the admirer or eulogist. And this attitude is quite in keeping with the purpose of this series of studies, which is that of calm and judicious inquiry into the history of men and events. It is not well to pull down the heroes we have admired because we have found faults in them. Nor should we refuse to see their errors because of a blind enthusiasm of faith in them and all they did. Neither attitude is the right one ; but rather that of independent and loving inquiry, which gives credit generously where credit is due, and which faithfully points out the errors of all. This seems to be the spirit in which Mr. Gay has written. He writes with an eye single to truth, and yet with a purpose to do justice to one whom Americans deservedly hold in high honor. To him Madison is not a hero or a perfect statesman ; but his share in leading the Colonies to a united government, and his part in forming and interpreting the Constitution, are brought out with emphasis, and with full recognition of its great importance. We need much more of this wise, critical spirit in historical writing, and a more thorough application of it to the men who stand highest on the pages of history. The true man loses nothing by this process, and the worth

* James Madison. By Sydney Howard Gay. (American Statesmen.) \$1.25.
Boston : Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

of history gains immensely. Madison may have had faults, but he was a man of clean and honest purpose. The debt we owe him is no smaller because of his personal defects, or the lowering of the political standard which guided his life. Those who read this book attentively will admire him none the less, but more judiciously. Mr. Gay has written an able book, and one to be read with both interest and profit. He has clearly grasped the main issues suggested by Madison's life and career, and he has brought these out distinctly. He dwells but slightly on Madison's personal life, giving nearly the whole of his book to his career as a statesman.

"The Bunting Ball."*

ALL is not gold that glitters ; but 'The Bunting Ball,' with its cover radiant as an eastern beauty with shining coins, is worthy of its gilt panels and golden edges, its handsome binding, clear type, excellent paper, and Weldon illustrations. If the big gold-piece on the cover is typical of the general worth of the book, none the less are the little gold-pieces, falling in a golden shower all over it, symbolical of the admirable detail. Indeed, the detail is the best part of it. The general conception, the 'satire' of it, is neither particularly original nor very amusing ; but the execution is delightful. The variety in the measures adds to the effect of the striking peculiarity of each ; the graceful absurdities of rhyme and rhythm in the choruses bring out doubly the sonorous absurdities of the blank verse. One hardly knows which is the funnier : the profound sentiment flippancy expressed in trifling measures, or the flippant sentiment profoundly wrapped in the dignity of Shakspearian periods. Toward the close, just as you begin to think there is a little falling off, you come upon the 'Chorus of Gluttons,' inimitably good, with a cadence and perfection of rhythm that haunts you long after the smoothly flowing words have escaped from memory. The measures are managed, indeed, with a daintiness to remind one of the music of Edmund Lear's incomparable nonsense verses, while there is added in those of 'The Bunting Ball' a delightful absurdity of meaning. One does not look for accents usually in the list of 'Persons of the Play' ; but try to read aloud even that page of 'The Bunting Ball,' and you will find yourself rolling the syllables round in your mouth as Demosthenes might have rolled his pebbles : with difficulty, but with enjoyment of the difficulty. From this you pass to the dignified blank verse reciting the stately honors of her

Who walks in paths beloved of her modiste
from the time she can walk until

After life's fitful fever she sleeps swell.

Then on to the melodious smoothness of the 'Chorus of Manceuvring Mammas,' till you strike again the absurdity of the mingled Seventeenth and Nineteenth Centuries, in

Peradventure, too,
When spring's first shy bud breaks, thou shalt become
A member of the sacred Union Club.

So much you take in, the first time you read the book. Taking it up again to read some of the funniest passages to a friend, you find how greatly it gains by being read aloud, and you also find that, so far from having exhausted, you had really hardly discovered, what was best in the satire. Mrs. Bunting's apology for Jane, that she certainly did not mean to snub any of her guests, not knowing yet which guests it would do to snub, because

her snobbery, like a lily's bud,
Sheathed in green ignorance, is immature,
Indefinite, undetermined,

and the delicate obstinacy of the polite guests who will not pass into the supper-room to leave untasted the social

scandal spread before them in the drawing-room, are instances of the double satire, the satire underlying satire, which comes out better and better with each repeated reading.

We have little respect for the interest in a book which is made to centre either on knowing, or on not knowing, who wrote it. But it is impossible not to feel a gentle interest in the 'guesses' as to the authorship of 'The Bunting Ball' which are being so widely advertised. The good faith of the publishers is pledged to the fact that the author is only one of the most brilliant and well-known of present literary writers. Good satirical humor is a decided feature of our literature just at present, and there are several writers who might have done a good deal of what is in 'The Bunting Ball' ; but the skill as well as the cleverness, the *technique* as well as the topic, the beauty as well as the funniness in the execution, imply that the author is not merely a satirist but a poet.

Another "Sunbeam" Voyage.*

WHEN was there a season when a new volume by Lady Brassey and a new flash from the 'Sunbeam' were not welcome to the sybarite in the hammock or the lounger on the piazza ? The yachting woman is a phenomenon of these phenomenal times. To be sure, there was Cleopatra's barge, and Artemisia's trireme, and the boat laden with mysterious women that floats out of sight in the 'Mort d'Arthur.' Icelandic legend is full of flaming dragon-ships manned (?) by women that come and go on missions of terror or magic. But that 'The Ancient Mariner' should finally and irretrievably become a woman—that those who go down to the sea in ships and have their business in the great waters should finally and irretrievably turn out to be females,—are signs and wonders, if not portents, of these Amazonian times. And that these female 'b'hoys' should be so delightful ! The Cooks and the Drakes, the Frobishers and the Raleghs, would surely have to look to their laurels if they lived in the Nineteenth Century ; for who among modern travellers, male or female, land-lubber or sea-farer, wields a pen at once so graceful and so graphic as Lady Brassey's, or can talk the gibberish of hawser and halyard, spar-deck and topsail, so intelligibly and so fluently ? 'Pro unâ mulierculâ,' said a growling commentator of the heroine of the Trojan War ; 'pro unâ mulierculâ,' may the modern commentator add, were these bounding yachts planned and perpetrated, that we might reap the fruits of their globe-encircling voyages sitting quietly at home with one foot on the fender. Was there not a gadfly that stung Io and drove her all over the world ? Is there not a gadfly sitting on the wheel of the 'Sunbeam' and urging her to this perpetual and perennial tarantella-dance over the seas for our delectation ? This time (1883) Lady Brassey takes us a voyage of 14,000 miles 'In the Trades, the Tropics and the Roaring Forties ;' from England over to the Azores, thence through the Bahamas and the swarming Caribbean Archipelago to Venezuela, and back by the fairyland of Madeira. What she sees on this voyage is told in her own unrivalled manner, in pure English, with beautiful simplicity, and with a rare power of realization and description. She takes in at a glance a whole horizon, and gives you just what you want to see. Each scene is as distinct as the lines and the life within a coin—a medallion-image hung round your memory, and refusing to be severed from it. In this way her plastic touch lightens page after page, and traces a gallery of pictures bright as the seas through which she moves. She herself is the 'sunbeam' through which this delicate photography is done ; the soul and spirit of the ship as it trails down the crowding islands ; and the mirror in which all the tropic wonderland is afloat. And as soon as she touches pen to paper she is transformed into the happiest of 'mediums' for the spirits of the vasty deep to trickle

* The Bunting Ball. Illustrated by C. D. Weldon. \$1.50. New York : Funk & Wagnalls.

* In the Trades, the Tropics, and the Roaring Forties. By Lady Brassey. 520 Illustrations and 9 Maps. \$5. New York : Henry Holt & Co.

through. Her book, too, literally swarms with beautiful illustrations, conceived and executed in a manner only second to the unstudied charm of the text. If a book—even a tropic book—could be over-illustrated, this is the case in the present instance; but we cannot find it in our hearts to wish a single illustration away.

A New Life of Sydney Smith.*

SYDNEY SMITH is one of the few men of a large literary reputation who can be read about with greater advantage than they can be read. His reputation rests much less on his books than on himself and what he was to his times. Readable as his essays are, they do not give us Sydney Smith. One might even read all his books, and still not know him in any such sense as that in which we should know Milton and Wordsworth from the reading of their poems. His conversation and his wit made his reputation. His humor may be better seen and appreciated in the books about him than in his own writings. Yet no such statement as this, however true it may be, ought to blind us to Smith's vigorous commonsense and sound judgment, or to the wide influence he exerted in behalf of reform and social progress. Writing on passing events, the interest of his writings has lessened with time, but there can be no lessening of interest in his life, or in the rich droppings from his conversation, which have come down to us fragrant with wisdom and wit. Time has made it possible for us to have a new and closer look at him than was possible in the biography prepared by his daughter Saba, Lady Holland. Much fresh material has been gleaned; and we have reason to be thankful to Mr. Reid for the thorough manner in which he has studied Sydney Smith's career. He has given us a bright and refreshing book, that will be received with pleasure by every admirer of the great wit. He gives us over seventy letters never before published, though not more than a score of them are of special interest. Many of them are mere notes and invitations to dinner; but all of them contain some mark of the author's genius. Many new anecdotes and facts are brought together; and the whole life of Sydney Smith is presented in its strongest and most noble aspects. His career throughout is presented in a strong light, as he aids in founding *The Edinburgh Review*, as he preaches and lectures in London, as he retires to a small rural parish in Yorkshire, as he joins in the agitations in behalf of political reform, and as he enters on his wider labors of later years. Mr. Reid dwells lovingly on the part taken in the reform agitation by this lover of good company. Always on the side of the weak and oppressed, he zealously espoused the cause of liberty, and he dealt many sturdy blows in its behalf. Sydney Smith is here presented as a remarkable wit and humorist, but also as one who never debased his gifts of this kind in any manner. His life was pure and loving, his character upright and manly, his genius turned always toward the good of humanity.

Recent Fiction.

'WHITE FEATHERS,' by G. I. Cervus (Lippincott), is a striking and original story, very full of incident and 'situations,' but with many hints of character and by no means destitute of a moral. Dr. Mitchell has just written a novel especially to illustrate that the backbone of all the virtues is courage, and 'White Feathers,' in taking up the same theme, brings out powerfully the part that bravery bears among traits essential to right conduct. It is true that there is infinite pitifulness in the fact proved, that the young man's lack of courage was partly due to a deranged mind, but it is evident that the author also meant to show that his deranged mind was partly due to his lack of courage; and that all his trouble was brought about by his indulging in speculation—a very mild and simple form of speculation as matters in Wall Street go, but still speculation—is the final moral of the whole. The author has been singularly just in treating the matter; it is shown that the hero had not really

invested in a wild scheme, but in one that eventually proved very valuable; his innocence is established completely in the affair at the bank. The point is, that whatever the final results of such speculation, the game is not worth the candle—the reward is not great enough for the anxiety. The story is a pitiful one, and it is impossible not to feel for the poor fellow at whom his lady-love throws her white ostrich plumes with the taunt that he had better wear them; and the closing paragraph, or rather the closing sentence, is a vivid, pathetic volume in itself. But it is also impossible not to feel the hero's weakness as originally the cause of all his troubles. It is perhaps less what we do than what we are afraid to appear to have done—what we are afraid of bearing the consequences or the reputation of—that gauges the final amount of our wrong-doing. The story of 'White Feathers' is certainly interesting, and it leaves one with suggestive food for thought to linger longer than the moral of most novels.

'THE WIDOW WYSE' (Cupples Upham & Co.) is an entertaining little book, good for its brevity, its swift movement, and its frequently clever bits of character. It is stated that Mr. Aphorpe is supposed to be the portrait of a well-known Boston wit; but there is little to suggest the trenchant sayings of the gentleman who wished some one would be kind enough to tether a shorn lamb at the corner of Winter and Tremont Streets during the winter and spring. The allusions to a beautiful house full of treasures and to the gentleman's versatility of gifts, his inherited wealth and elegant leisure, are all that could identify him. But why try to identify him? Mr. Aphorpe is very good as Mr. Aphorpe, though he does not strike one as very good as a portrait of somebody else; and his bluff ability to see through a stone wall is delightful. The real art of the book—slight and careless art, but none the less ingenious and clever—is in the delineation of the Widow Wyse; the fair young widow with that supreme art of fascination which is merely the ability to flatter—to make every one, from the butcher's boy, almost, to Mr. Aphorpe, believe when he meets her that for the first time in his life he is appreciated. The skill, of course, lies in the subtlety of the flattery, and this, so difficult to reproduce in fiction, has been very cleverly given. We are not told in long paragraphs the woman's motives and her successes, but we see her at work. She fits from page to page, from friend to friend, from plot to plot, from airy speech to deliberate intrigue, with a capacity to foresee what may be useful to her, perhaps to-morrow, perhaps five years hence, which is exceedingly well reproduced by the author.

MR. LATHROP has given us in 'True' (Funk & Wagnalls' Standard Library) some of his best work. It is, indeed, as much better than even what was good in the 'Echo of Passion' and in 'Newport,' as life is better than society, or, in another sense, as society is better than fashion. The public are rather tired of even the cleverest of what are known as 'keen satires on New York society,' and it is pleasant to find that the locality for this new story is not the 'world' but Pamlico Sound, an indication in itself that the tale will be breezy and interesting. The men and women of the story live and move and have their being; they are not 'types,' sorry types of a poor kind of humanity, only valuable in fiction for the opportunity given to the author to say 'bright' things about them. Imagination just touches the tale with a curious linking of the remote past to the practical present; a much better employment for imagination, by the way, than struggling to ferret out the existence of unlawful passion, or miserable motives, or hateful feeling, in the souls of one's literary creations. Thus, on its practical side, 'True' is better than 'An Echo of Passion' as a good photograph is better than a poor oil-painting; while, on its imaginative side, it is as much better than 'Newport,' as a good oil-painting is better than a good photograph.

'KATHERINE,' by Susa S. Vance (Lippincott), is not a pleasant story, dealing as it does with the fate of a woman cruelly wronged, and, incidentally, with a good many very disagreeable people. But owing all the good that is finally brought out of evil to the teaching and example of a young clergyman, it is original in making this clergyman a Unitarian, whose belief is very well stated in different conversations. He is almost a radical in religion, yet not radical enough to wish to give up religion, and his theories and practice are stated with a calmness and clearness that make it seem more strange that the author could not trust entirely to these arguments, instead of trying to add to their force by melodramatic contrast with a very poor clergyman of the opposite faith.—'A PENNLESS GIRL' from the German of W. Heimburg, by Mrs. A. L. Wister (Lippincott), is one

* Life and Times of the Rev. Sydney Smith. Based on Family Documents and the Recollections of Personal Friends. By Stuart J. Reid. \$3. New York : Harper.

of the pleasant and healthful stories which Mrs. Wister never fails to select for us and to translate charmingly. Besides the interest of the graceful and pretty story, it is a pleasing reminder of our privilege as American citizens to take up such a study of the frightful thing it is in foreign countries to be 'a penniless girl' of aristocratic birth and tastes.

THE QUIET and attractive sketches by P. Deming that have appeared from time to time in the magazines prepare us pleasantly for the small bound volume of 'Tompkins and Other Folks.' (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) As the title proves, the stories deal with what is considered commonplace in life, though it is often made delightfully interesting in literature; and the original touch in the way Mr. Deming makes it interesting consists in the fact that he does not try to do so. He does not 'bring out' the pathos, or 'show up' the humor, or develop the possibilities, or add to his subject by fruitful comment of his own. He simply takes what is humdrum and leaves it humdrum; yet, with a skill the more satisfying because it defies analysis, he interests us profoundly in people who are neither wise, nor witty, nor funny, nor unfortunate, nor useful to point a moral. There is, therefore, a deep and wonderful art in the very simplicity of these quiet little tales.

Minor Notices.

A MOST important event in the American philological world is the appearance of Vol. I. of Ginn & Heath's 'College Series of Greek Authors,' editorially supervised by Professors J. W. White, L. R. Packard, and T. D. Seymour. It opens appropriately and auspiciously with the 'Antigone' of Sophocles (\$1.) edited from Wolff's edition by Prof. Martin L. D'Orge of the University of Michigan. This is one of the most beautiful of Greek plays—austrae, sculpturesque, intellectual crowded with brilliant choral interludes, cold and yet impassioned, with white intense underglow, spiritual yet with a spirituality touched with fire. How closely Antigone, in her determination to obey the divine law and bury her murdered brother, resembles the Holy Women who came with spices to anoint the Crucified! Her 'countenance' too, 'is like the lightning,' and her 'raiment is as white as snow.' The copious foot-notes of this edition are most helpful; the rhythmic schemes of the choral odes are carefully marked out according to the method of Schmidt's 'Rhythmic and Metric'; and the Greek text is delightful to the eye. Would that it were within the plan of the editors to seize and make use of the fortunate idea of Prof. Palmer—namely, to give us the Greek on one page and a rhythmic prose translation on the other. Their editions would then benefit not only school-boys, but everybody who has ever drunk of the Fountain of Trevi and longs to drink again. Do what you will, boys will ride 'ponies'—*atra atra* sitting behind as their examinations loom in front. Shall they ride with Ichabod Crane, Tam O'Shanter or John Gilpin, or harness their winged chariot to an Oxford *burro*? The Immortal Horses of Homer cry out 'for shame!' About twenty of our leading Grecians co-operate in this series of editions, which is issued in handy paper-backed volumes. It is contemplated to issue from three to six volumes annually, and the issue of each will be double—the simple text (50 cts.) and the text with notes (\$1.).

'HOW TO LIVE A CENTURY,' by J. M. Peebles, M.D., (M. L. Holbrook) is a pamphlet containing many sensible ideas, but not a great many new ones. The author is a physician who does not believe in the entire efficacy of any one practice, but would unhesitatingly adopt anything that he finds good in any, from allopathy to faith-cure. He advocates pure air, good food, sensible clothing, open fireplaces, and no tea or coffee; and occasionally he does give a new suggestion, in such a hint as that it would be better for consumptives to go to Newfoundland than to Florida. He would have us remember that cold air is not necessarily pure air. He is undoubtedly right in thinking that life might be prolonged by a little more sense, or rather by a good deal more knowledge; but to infer that because trees and parrots and elephants live hundreds of years, man, crowned with reason, ought to live as long, is to forget that 'reason' is a fruitful source of exhaustion. Septimius Felton was told he might live forever if he would consent never to feel emotion; but most of us think the game is worth the candle, and prefer short life full of emotion and experience and thought to the long life of a tortoise. Dr. Peebles himself very judiciously reminds Dio Lewis, when the latter insists that we ought not to take water with food because a horse never takes a mouthful of hay

and then a swallow of water, that neither does a horse go to the fire to warm himself or start off for the blacksmith shop when he needs shoeing. To regulate what human beings ought to do or could become by what being entirely different creatures do and become, is an absurdity, aside from the extreme difficulty of carrying out such advice as this: 'If you get angry, take a bath and go to bed and sleep; if the world abuses you, take extra sleep; if you are dyspeptic and discontented, take a long sound sleep. At the same time it will do no harm to refresh our memories from Dr. Peebles's pamphlet as to the advantages of profiting by what we know of sanitary science.'

IT CAN CERTAINLY be said of 'Fifty Years' Observation of Men and Events,' by Gen. E. D. Keyes (Charles Scribner's Sons), that it is entertaining. Almost anyone ought to be interesting who can remember seeing a letter in 1838 addressed to 'Mr. Seth Fisher, Chicago,—near Alton,—Illinois,' and Gen. Keyes's position has been one from very early manhood to give him opportunities for observation of exceptional men and unusual events. To write with perfect taste such a book as he has attempted requires almost superhuman qualities. Never needlessly to lower our estimate of great men, never to tell a good story at the expense of anyone who might be hurt by it, never to tell a story that is not good, to deal with only salient points and illustrative incidents, requires more than mortal capacity; but Gen. Keyes has written a book as free from 'les défauts de ses qualités' as could be expected. A certain swiftness of movement carries one along from incident to anecdote almost as in a novel. The author's own opinions on some subjects seem curiously behind the times; as his naive description of the exultation he felt in finally owning a slave after having experienced the pride of ownership in various minor matters, such as dogs, horses and land, and in finding the position which it at once gave him in Charleston society, to have patronized the 'institution.' But such opinions as these are thrown in carelessly, without any special intention of giving them emphasis, and one reads with a smile rather than a frown the author's fear that a time will come when they will teach piano-playing in the public schools, and his curious summary of the progress that has been made in the last forty years. Perhaps the leading point to be made in favor of the book is that it is enjoyable; and it can justly be added that it contributes also to one's intelligent comprehension of the men and events it deals with.

'THREE VASSAR GIRLS in South America,' by Lizzie W. Champney, illustrated by 'Champ' and others (Estes & Lauriat), is an admirable book of travel, with a simple little story running through it. The illustrations are attractive and do really illustrate, not the least clever of them being the tail-pieces to the chapters. There are bright little touches here and there, such as that of the young lady who in economizing luggage even cut her hair short, and that of the matron's consternation on being charged one thousand five hundred reis for her breakfast only to find that it meant seventy-five cents. But the best moral conveyed by the book is its lesson to similar story-tellers, in showing that the book is good chiefly because the travellers in it did not try to be funny.

"Victor Durand."

'VICTOR DURAND,' the drama by Mr. Henry Guy Carleton, now running at Wallack's Theatre, is suffering from the extravagance of its first reception. The veterans who attend a first-night performance have a personal interest in it. They know the actors off the stage: recount their domestic affairs: can name their favorite bar-room or the amount of their tailors' bills. If the author is an American of any repute, he is subjected to the same familiarities. If he is going to be married, the young lady to whom he is engaged is shown in her box. 'How pretty,' say the ladies. 'Let us hope that the piece will succeed.' Thus the oldest joke is sure of a laugh: the most conventional situation produces applause: and if the curtain falls with noise and celerity, the success of the piece is assured. 'She is certainly very pretty,' say the ladies, as they put on their cloaks.

For personal reasons like these, 'Victor Durand' was received with the stormiest enthusiasm. 'The School for Scandal,' though it was boisterously welcomed at its first

hearing, was regarded with no such favor as 'Victor Durand.' An American Sheridan had arisen. A greater than Sheridan was here. A Sheridan of wit combined with a Sardou of construction. 'It is with great pleasure,' say the advertisements, 'that Mr. Wallack calls attention to the great sensation caused in literary and artistic circles of New York by the unqualified success of Mr. Guy Carleton's new play. For the first dramatic attempt of a young author, it is considered by all to be an extraordinary and most meritorious effort.' They say that at the first performance of Barrière's 'Faux Bonshommes,' the pit rose and cried 'Molière, Molière!' Similarly, 'literary and artistic circles' now rise to greet 'Victor Durand.' 'Sheridan, Sheridan,' they cry. Or rather 'Shakspeare, Shakspeare.'

Well, THE CRITIC is not without a right to speak for 'literary and artistic circles,' and THE CRITIC is absolutely sure that 'Victor Durand' has made no sensation whatever. When Mr. Wallack, in his advertisements, assumes the pen of Mr. Vincent Crummles, he forgets the dignity of his house. We are all glad to welcome American plays. American plays are much better suited to our boards than English plays or French plays. An American school of playwrights is the need of the hour. Men of Mr. Carleton's stamp deserve critical encouragement. But American audiences are not so ignorant of dramatic rudiments as to accept a callow little work like 'Victor Durand' as a masterpiece. It is commonplace—it is conventional—it is monotonous. It has no scene that anybody remembers: no line that anybody repeats: no character that anybody discusses with his friends. Nobody comes home and says 'Go and see it.' Its story is the kind of story that appears in the *Ledger*; its style is the style which the readers of the *Ledger* approve. Having four effective endings to its acts, it shows just enough dramatic talent to sustain a hope that Mr. Carleton may with some years' practice become a playwright. But we expressed the same hope when Mr. Edgar Fawcett wrote his 'False Friend,' and where, alas, is Mr. Fawcett now?

At the back of 'Victor Durand' lies the idea of the 'Morte Civile.' There is the escaped galley-slave who is punished in his domestic relations. Even in Salvini's hands he was not a very effective galley-slave. He saw his wife remarried, heard his daughter deny him, found himself dead, indeed; and yet, although his agony sought the keenest physical expression, though he died among those whom he loved, the spectators were not deeply moved. Their apathy was begotten of the sense that a strong man, oppressed by misfortune, has no right to sob and moan and invite death. He should be up and doing. And so with Mr. Carleton's drawing-room galley-slave. He poses, contorts his features, embraces his wife, and gives himself up to the law. 'You are innocent,' cry the spectators. 'Assert it. Don't go whining and maunding about the stage. Take your specious villain by the throat, tear off his decoration, accuse him of the crime, even if you cannot prove him guilty. That is life. That is drama. That is success.'

Again, Mr. Carleton has much to learn in the art of climax. He works entirely for the close of his act, careless of his intermediate scenes if his final scene be strong. But the final scene rarely contains the climax of a well-contrived act. In the 'Long Strike' there are twelve final scenes, and none of them contains a climax. 'Let us go to dinner' is the normal remark which brings down the curtain on the French stage. Robertson, who knew his business, concentrated all his power on his intermediate scenes. Mr. Boucicault, in his Irish dramas, put his best writing into his episodes. An act which is weak in the opening, weak in the middle, can never be strong in the close; and while the thump of a 'quick curtain' makes the injudicious applaud, it can never produce, or even aid, success. The sentimental incident with a milk-jug in 'School,' the brewing of the whisky in 'The Colleen Bawn,' the tea-kettle in 'Caste,' the sewing-machine in 'The Two Roses'—these are things that

people remember and advise their friends to see. And that is the only secret of theatrical success.

'Victor Durand,' then, is a tolerable little drama, which nobody would have noticed but for its portentous puffing. It will not rank high among American plays. It has none of the virility of 'My Partner,' the color of 'Esmeralda,' the human nature of 'Young Mrs. Winthrop.' It makes nobody laugh; it makes nobody cry. Being decently written and decently played, it will enjoy a decent success, and then be decently forgotten.

The Lounger.

WHEN a foolish Englishman wishes to achieve a little notoriety, he persuades the editor of a newspaper to print his Impressions of America. Sir Lepel Griffin—the noble author of 'The Great Republic'—tried this device a year ago, and succeeded to admiration. The editor of *The Fortnightly* having kindly given him rope enough to hang himself with, he lost no time in adjusting the noose and kicking away the stool he was standing on. Instead of the conventional black hood, however, he had donned the cap and bells; and the tinkling that accompanied his contortions so charmed the ear of 'Mr. Capper, the well-known engineer,' that that worthy man immediately cast about him for an editor as well disposed towards would-be suicides as the director of *The Fortnightly* had shown himself to be.

WHAT he wanted, he found in the office of *The Pall Mall Gazette*. The diatribe reprinted from that journal in THE CRITIC of last week out-griffin's Griffin. Sir Lepel was never studiously malicious. At worst, he only trifled with our young affections. When he had put it down that we were the meanest people on the face of the earth, the rudest, the most cowardly, he never failed to restore our equilibrium by assuring us that we were unsurpassed for courage, politeness and generosity. He was not so bad a fellow at heart: he was only an unmitigated ass. The 'well-known' Mr. Capper, on the other hand, though the element of asininity is not conspicuous by its absence from his composition, is a much more pestiferous personage than Sir Lepel. One has only to read what he says of American railroads to see that he is a deliberate, wilful and persistent liar. The word is a harsh one, but unfortunately the language provides no exact synonyme for it, and no word that failed to convey precisely the same meaning would meet the emergency.

I AM GLAD to hear that the new edition of Omar Khayyám has proved to be a pecuniary as well as an artistic success. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Vedder's royalty on the sale of the book already amounts to \$20,000. As a rule, work of this sort does not become popular. Blake—almost the only painter whose designs it suggests—was certainly unappreciated in his day. It was Blake, however, who paved the way for the success of such a book as this beautifully illustrated edition of the 'Rubaiyat.'

THE HARD TIMES that everybody is talking about do not appear to prevent people from buying what they want. Trade in general may be affected, but there are special branches of it that do not seem to have suffered. People are supposed to look upon magazines as luxuries, and to cut them off as soon as their bank-accounts begin to grow small; but neither *Harper's* nor *The Century* has suffered on this account. Indeed, they have had exceptionally prosperous years. The circulation of *The Century* has run up from 140,000 to 180,000 copies per month, and it is still increasing. Mr. Devinne has 27 presses going night and day in printing the current issue and new editions of the December number.

IT IS PLEASANT to see brethren dwell together in unity, and it is even more pleasant to see those who are supposed to be rivals lending each other a helping hand. Mr. H. C. Bunner is the editor of *Puck* and Mr. J. A. Mitchell is the editor of *Life*—and *Puck* and *Life* are both humorous journals; but when Mr. Bunner published his collection of poems, 'Airs from Arcady,' last spring, the cover of the book was designed by Mr. Mitchell. For *Life* Mr. Mitchell is now preparing a series of sketches of a very bold character, peculiar and yet delicate and refined. They are to begin in the next issue of that paper, and they will continue for several months. They are to be called 'Glimpses of Heaven' and they will afford an artist's views of the heavenly country of which we had authors' opinions when Miss Phelps left the 'Gates Ajar' and Mrs. Oliphant sent her 'Little Pil-

grim' up higher. Mr. Mitchell's sketches, of which I have seen the first three, are imaginative; they are satirical in intent, although they will not offend the most fastidious. Mr. Mitchell has done a new thing in a particularly happy manner.

THE HISTORY of literature is full of curious coincidences, but we question if there is one on record much more curious than that which marked the publication of 'In Partnership,' the recent collection of short stories by Mr. Brander Matthews and Mr. Bunner. Most of these stories had already appeared in the magazines and elsewhere; but one of them, Mr. Bunner's pathetic 'A Letter and a Paragraph,' was printed for the first time. In it was set forth the death of a certain Reginald Barclay. The book was published on September 23; and on September 23, as I learned from a notice in *The New York Times* of a few days later, there actually died a Mr. Reginald Barclay. Here the coincidence terminates, for there was no identity whatsoever between Mr. Bunner's struggling hero and the Reginald Barclay of real life and death. But the coincidence deserves to be put on record.

ONE of the prettiest little books I have seen in many a long day is Mr. Andrew Lang's 'Rhymes à la Mode,' published by Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. It has for a frontispiece a dainty little drawing by Mr. E. A. Abbey of an old fellow in knee-breeches and ruffled shirt, bringing music from the keys of a spindle-legged spinet. There is no artist I know of who has so caught the spirit of the Eighteenth Century as Mr. Abbey. He with his pencil, and Mr. Dobson with his pen, seem to be as much at home with the belles et beaux of a hundred years ago as with those of to-day.

Was Thackeray a Sham?

To THE EDITORS OF THE CRITIC:

In his 'Memoirs of a Man of the World,' Mr. Yates reproduces the full text of his article in *Town Talk*, which occasioned the quarrel between himself and Mr. Thackeray. As we are not informed that the writer considers it unjust in any particular, we must regard it as the statement of his deliberate opinion that Thackeray's 'adulation of birth and position was extravagant,' that he 'flattered the aristocracy,' and, when he came to this country, attacked the Georges and eulogized Washington to please his American audiences and make money. Leaving aside the last charge, is it true that Thackeray was guilty of flattery and subserviency toward what are called 'great people'? To us in America who observed the man and have read his books, the idea seems incredible. Has it any other supporters but Mr. Yates and Lord Beaconsfield, who is supposed to have intended his St. Barbe in 'Endymion' for Thackeray? I am unwilling to accept the testimony of either writer without something to sustain it. If Thackeray was such a person, we were certainly deceived by him. To his friends in this country, the creator of Colonel Newcome and Henry Esmond appeared to be a man of very high tone; and his unflattering portraits of Lord Steyne, the Earl of Crabs, and Sir Pitt Crawley, seemed to indicate very little tendency to 'flatter the aristocracy.' On the contrary, this satirist, who spared no class of society, had apparently selected people of 'birth and position' as the peculiar objects of his satire; and I think I risk nothing in saying that the general impression produced by Thackeray was that of a man of very unusual pride and independence of character. It is certain that any such independence is incompatible with Mr. Yates's view of the individual. According to the writer he flattered the nobility, bent his proud back before birth and position, had his adulation always ready—in a word, 'good, old Thackeray,' with his bitter denunciation of the whole race of toad-eaters, shams, and subservient people, was himself a sham and toad-eater, and a very extravagant one. The world is not apt to believe this, until the charge is established by proof. For myself, I must say that the disillusion would be immense. It is not good to have one's admirations in life or letters degraded and destroyed; and to affix this character to the memory of Thackeray is to soil the individual and all that he has written. I do not believe

that the characterization by Mr. Yates is just, and I think the London associates of the great novelist ought to tell us what is the truth.

One other point is worth notice. The venomous cartoon of Lord Beaconsfield—if it was meant for Thackeray—has at least the merit of being consistent, since he is there represented as a mere hanger-on of good society and distinguished people. The portrait is at least intelligible, which is more than can be said of Mr. Yates's. He represents Thackeray's appearance, and, by fair implication, his character, as 'invariably that of a cool, suave, well-bred gentleman,' and the question inevitably arises, 'How was it possible for a well-bred gentleman to cringe and flatter as Thackeray is said to have done? What is it to be a gentleman?' One would suppose that it involved some pride of character, at least, whether the man laying claim to it rolls in his coach or drives a plane. It is tolerably certain that it is *not* to be meanly subservient to anybody—to bend the spine and crook the knee before my lord or anybody else—either for profit or from a poor sense of inferiority. At least that is the American doctrine. Mr. Yates says that Thackeray was invariably a well-bred gentleman, but was accustomed to do this. It is rather difficult to reconcile the two characters as existing in the same person. Thackeray's life remains unwritten in spite of the sketches by Mr. Trollope and others, but the time has come when one of the greatest of English men-of-letters should have his biographer. This biographer ought not to be a mere eulogist like Boswell, but it is equally certain that he ought not to be Mr. Yates. His personal acquaintance with the novelist was probably not intimate, and it is quite possible that his estimate was based on trifles or unfounded reports. If the further fact be considered, that the two writers had come to open quarrel—that Mr. Yates was certainly mortified by the action of the Garrick Club—it will not be maintained that he is an impartial witness.

I can only repeat that I am not willing to accept this bitter caricature of a great writer by a personal opponent. I wait patiently, with many others, to have Thackeray's real portrait drawn for us, by some one who knew him thoroughly, and can denote him truly.

BOYCE, V.A.

J. E. C.

A Few Words About Mr. Gosse.

THERE were no vacant seats in Huntington Hall on the night of December 2, when Mr. Gosse gave his first lecture in Boston; and the foolish virgins may well have outnumbered the wise, to judge from the numerous appeals for tickets made to the kindly but empty-handed management of Lowell Institute. Besides the regular lecture-goers, to whom the habit of omnivorous absorption has become a second nature, there was a goodly gathering of 'fair women and brave men,' Wise Men of the East, and leaders of fashion. The lovely Perugino had stepped out of her frame to grace the occasion; the tall form of the well-known Rector of Trinity Church was conspicuous in the audience; while the Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table paid the lecturer the compliment of gratified attention during this and all his subsequent lectures. Curiosity may have filled the hall that first evening, but the persistent regularity with which the same persons appeared in their places every night, even during the exceptionally inclement weather, testified to a more than ordinary attraction. Perfect simplicity of manner disarmed criticism; the unaffected interest of the lecturer in his subject became contagious, and one lent a constantly attentive ear, pleased with 'The Battle of the Summer Islands,' with sonnets to Sacharissa, even with quotations from 'Gondibert.'

The chosen theme—the transition from Shakspeare to Pope—was well-handled, and Mr. Gosse's delicate appreciation was a constant delight, making sunshine in many shady places. At the outset, the difference was very clearly stated

between the study of literature *per se*, and the study of the history of literature, in which one was then engaged. For this reason, the grand figure of the author of 'Paradise Lost' remained shadowy in the background. Political pre-occupation early in life, and acquired taste later, prevented Milton from becoming a leader in this reactionary movement like his contemporary Waller, who, one hundred and fifty years after his death, was esteemed 'the greatest lyric poet England had ever produced.' Mr. Gosse made a formal distinction between the romantic and classical styles, calling one the overflow and the other the distich school of poets. In the first the phrase outruns the line; in the last it becomes crystallized in the stanza or couplet. Of this, Pope furnishes the most perfect examples. The distich form was a natural reaction from the carelessness and license into which the Elizabethan school had degenerated. Their extravagance was more keenly felt in the ebb of passion and patriotism, as thought and feeling died out. Shakspeare is often slovenly and careless in expression; much more so the average and inferior writers of his time. The euphuistic school, not peculiar to England in that age, was also shown to be reactionary. Shakspeare could be natural and artificial by turns. He did not use the expression 'crawling scourge that smites the leafy plain' instead of caterpillar, but he said sleep when he choose, and he also said 'balm of hurt minds' when it pleased him to do so. The lecturer was most happy in his description of the personal relations of Davenant with Shakspeare and Milton, effectually disposing of the story first told by Pope of Davenant's paternity. Richard Davenant, the commonplace clergyman immortalized by Shakspeare's kisses, was beautifully described. The lecture on the exiles was most interesting. Waller was the last subject, and many pleasant anecdotes were told of him as humorist, wit, lover, and courtier, a cold-water drinker in that tipping age. In conclusion, Mr. Gosse said farewell to 'the most indulgent, most appreciative, and most inspiring audience he had ever known.' It is hoped, and we understand there is good ground for the hope, that the lecturer may be heard in this city before his return to London.

As a great many persons who have attended Mr. Gosse's interesting lectures before the Lowell Institute, or have met him socially in New York or Boston, are desirous of knowing something about his life and work, we take pleasure in reprinting the following sketch from Mr. Stedman's paper on 'Some London Poets,' in *Harper's Monthly* for May, 1882:

Here is a likeness in profile, after a drawing by Alma Tadema of Edmund W. Gosse, one of the youngest and most active of them all. His name at the end of exquisite lyrics, or learned and thoughtful criticisms, is becoming widely known. I do not think of any writer more determined to excel or more rapidly succeeding, for, besides a distinct literary faculty, he has, in the words of one of his friends, 'a magnetic vehemence which has repeatedly got him his way in life.' Mr. Gosse, when I saw him first, was but thirty years old, and looked even younger: the healthiest and brightest of faces, with light hair, and complexion betokening a German ancestry—a type none the less known to New England, and presenting so well the vigor, delicacy, intellectual finish of Dr. Holmes's 'Brahmin Caste,' that it was difficult not to believe him a graduate of Harvard or Yale. He keeps his Muse within ready call, but also has a notably fine gift of critical judgment, and of expressing it in felicitous prose. The effective work of late turned off by him adds steadily to his influence, both as a contributor to the authoritative reviews and magazines, and as the author or editor of books which are books. No less than twenty-nine of the articles in Ward's anthology were prepared by him. Their range begins with the early melodists—Lodge, Carew, Herrick and others, and includes poets of every period down to Moore and Barry Cornwall. The editor carefully thanks Mr. Gosse, 'whose great knowledge of English poetry, especially of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, has been of the highest service to the book.' His most important work in prose thus far is the 'Studies in the Literature of Northern Europe,' a delightful survey of the poets and poetry of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, with a chapter on Walther von der Vogelweide, of Germany. In this

field Gosse's taste and linguistic acquirements place him quite at home, and not the least attraction of the book is found in its metrical translations from some of the poets reviewed. I recently saw a paragraph in which his original verse was termed a product of the extreme modern pre-Raphaelite school—a classification that seems to me hastily made. The first impression that one derives from his lyrics and dramas is their unlikeness to verse of the purely technical mode. In art, they certainly are refined and flawless, but with the finish of the natural types of English poetry, and they depend very little upon the aid of restraints and mediaeval restorations. The depth of his poetic sentiment is half concealed by its simplicity. Besides, he excels many of the later poets in knowledge of the rural scenery and feeling of his own country, and interests himself more with their expression. When not yielding to home suggestions, his verse often is upon classical themes, or takes its motive from the Norseland region so familiar to him. But I should say that both himself and Mr. Dobson in their several ways are loyal to English resources, although Gosse also was one of the first to examine the early French ballad forms, and to illustrate them by their ready and beautiful handling in poems of his own.

Were I to narrate in detail the story of Mr. Gosse's life, it would be found of singular interest, and would show the bent of native talent to overcome any restrictions imposed by adverse training. The mere outline will suggest what I mean. This poet was born in Kingsland, in the northeast of London, in 1849. His father is the naturalist, Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S., who was forty years old at the time of Edmund's birth. The elder Gosse's professional travels in the West Indies, Canada and the United States are well known. During the son's youth the father had not gained a lucrative reputation, and the boy's childhood was but a narrow and precarious experience. His mother was a woman of intellectual power, and a Greek and Hebrew scholar, and her son still possesses her manuscript commentary on the Book of Daniel, of which both the English and Hebrew text are beautiful specimens of calligraphy. She was an accepted writer of devout works, and of a series of tracts that had an immense circulation for years after her death. From these two parents the poet inherited his mental traits; but they both were under the stress of great religious asceticism—were illuminati in their way—and went, the father from Methodism, the mother from the Church of England, into the sect of the Plymouth Brethren. The mother visited the poor, organized meetings, and 'labored for souls.' The father was a recluse with his microscopic investigations. Their child had little company, save a library of very solemn works. He grew up a brooding, old-fashioned boy, of the Paul Dombey order, and once alarmed his parents by declaring that if he did not walk in a green field he should die. There was no Dombeyan fortune to obtain for him the sight of the country and the sea-shore. His mother sickened of a cancer, and the boy, at the age of seven, was her chief attendant in a cheerless lodging of two rooms in Pimlico. He saw enough of the horrors of pain and bodily dissolution to last him for a lifetime, his father being compelled to devote himself to bread-winning through all this period. After the mother's death, in 1857, the elder Gosse advanced in repute as a lecturer, and his fortunes suddenly improved, so that he gave up his London quarters, and bought a home near Torquay, in Devonshire. Meanwhile, Edmund had seen for the first a little of real outdoor life, and found companions of his own age at the house of some friends in Wales. A reunion with his father brought new impressions. He was desired to 'confess the Lord' in public baptism, and was pronounced a 'believer.' People came from all parts of Devonshire to see him immersed, and the ceremony was performed with great circumstance. Mr. Gosse's cheery face in manhood, his quick humor, and genial, healthy bearing, are a tribute to the elastic youth of the poetic temperament that will find its own and survive the most restrictive discipline.

But sunnier times came. In 1862 his father married a Quaker lady, who has been all that a wise and tender mother could be. She changed the lad's mental regimen, and sent him to private schools, where he found congenial sports and comrades. The rigidness of his early life possibly sharpened the poet's appetite for the beautiful, and intensified his subsequent devotion to it. In 1866, his father brought him up to town to earn his own living. Charles Kingsley took an interest in the youth, and secured him a nomination to the British Museum. His peculiar education made it difficult to pass an easy examination, but he got through and began life on £90 a year. He found a cheerful home in the house of some nice old ladies at Tottenham, where he staid for nine years, made unsuccessful and finally successful literary ventures, and wrote his first two books. He enjoyed his duties in the Museum, and began at once to educate himself systemat-

ically; his thirst for knowledge being so great that he made remarkable strides, especially in acquiring the Continental languages. A close friendship now ensued with a young man who, like himself, had a passion for poetry—John Arthur Blaikie—whose influence was stimulating to his taste and metrical talent. In 1870, Gosse then being twenty, the two friends prepared a volume for the press. It came out before Christmas, under the title of 'Madrigals, Songs and Sonnets,' by J. A. Blaikie and E. W. Gosse. The book, I suspect, made no great sale; but the first ventures of true poets are not thrown away. It introduced Gosse, at least, to Rossetti, Swinburne, and others, and from that time he began to draw ahead. In 1871, he became a writer for *The Spectator*. The same year he took a first journey to Norway, and wrote for *Fraser's* an account of his adventures in the Lofoden Islands. In 1872, he travelled through North Germany and Scandinavia, with special leave of absence for literary purposes—a journey which he repeated some years afterward. He made the friendship of Andersen, Bjornson, and other Northern lights. In 1873, his first separate book of verse, 'On Viol and Flute,' gave him reputation as a poet. Next year he was on the staff of *The Examiner*, besides writing for *The Academy* and *Saturday Review*—a practice which he still maintains, and which journalists would be loath to have him forego.

As his joint venture with Blaikie had brought him influential literary friends, so his 'Viol and Flute' guided him to a poet's best possessions—a wife and household. Mr. Alma Tadema read and admired the new book, sought out the author, and introduced him to his own home. Here Gosse met Miss Nellie Epps, sister of the great painter's wife, wooed her, and married her in 1875. He now left the British Museum, being appointed by the Government, without his application, and on his wedding day, as Translator to the Board of Trade, at a salary of £400 a year. After all, they manage some things better in England than elsewhere. Since his marriage he has brought out the prose works formerly mentioned, his blank-verse tragedy of 'King Erik,' and a volume of 'New Poems,' all which have advanced his reputation. Of late he has been successfully turning his attention to narrative verse, of which it is to be hoped he soon will have a volume ready for the public. In observing the career, the sanguine energy, the versatile genius, of Mr. Gosse, one is frequently reminded of our own Bayard Taylor, and the resemblance between the two is continued by the young English poet's love of travel, and the ease with which he masters the languages and literature of various lands.

The Gosses live in a pleasant house in the northwestern part of London, near the abode of Robert Browning, whose friendship and confidence the younger poet enjoys. Their home is attractive, and on Sunday afternoons one who is welcomed there is sure to meet a choice gathering of guests, many of whom are well known to the literary and artistic world. During working hours, the poet occupies after the fashion of the Civil Service a snug little room by himself in the offices of the Board of Trade. Here his labors, though greatly esteemed, are not sufficiently prosaic and engrossing to forbid snatches of song from coming to him 'between times.' He takes a lively interest in America and American literature, and I am sure that he will ultimately fulfil his intention to see for himself the homes and reaches of the New World.

To win the friendship of Mr. Gosse there is no surer way than to be favored with that of Mr. Dobson, and it is the most natural thing in the world to see them both on the same morning, their daily occupations drawing them so near together that they are a brace of singing birds which a smooth-bore brings down at one aim. Mr. Gosse's office is at the head of Whitehall, and that of Mr. Dobson—also an official in the Board of Trade—is diagonally in the rear, upon the historic site of Whitehall Gardens.

Current Criticism

TENNYSON AND AUBREY DE VERE:—So far as regards the chief subject of the drama, the battle between Church and King, in the persons of Becket and Henry, we think that Mr. Aubrey de Vere, in his striking drama called 'St. Thomas of Canterbury,' has succeeded much better in leavening the mind of the reader with the ecclesiastical ideas of the time, than the Poet-Laureate has succeeded in 'Becket.' . . . If we have a more touching and a more adequate picture of Becket in the play of Mr. de Vere than we have in the new work of the Poet-Laureate, we have in the latter a much finer and more stirring picture of Henry than we find in the work of Mr. de Vere. In fact, perhaps, the interest of the new play centres somewhat more than it ought to do in Henry and somewhat less than it ought to do in Becket.

The picture which Tennyson gives us of Henry's sudden Angevine fury, and of the high imaginative statesmanship that alternated with it, is very striking, and, indeed, interests us far more deeply than the picture of the great ecclesiastical statesman to whom Henry was opposed.—*The Spectator*.

BAYARD TAYLOR'S RESTLESS ENERGY:—In all capacities—as journalist, traveller, lecturer, poet, artist, chargé d'affaires Minister at Berlin—he evinced the same boundless activity. At the time of his death he was only in his fifty-fourth year, and his extraordinary vitality was manifest to the last. His career was so prodigiously varied, so exuberant in versatility, that it might have well become a tolerably active octogenarian. A reference in his letters to the fate of Dickens is truly applicable to himself. His marvellous enterprise, robust health, and excessive spirits, compelled him to overtask his bodily powers, though he was seldom conscious of any strain. The tenement of clay was to all appearances impervious to ordinary assaults, and seemed destined to a green old age; but the very fierceness of his energy, the restless, unconquerable spirit that possessed him, undermined the fabric just when it seemed most assured of vitality. The man himself supplies a more interesting study, a profounder and more suggestive phenomenon, than his writings. Disappointing as these are to the student of American literature, he is typical of much that is most salient and individual in the American of this century, of the genius of a young and confident people, sensitive to criticism and conscious of the unshaped visions of a great future.—*The Saturday Review*.

'WHAT OF THEY?'—The esteemed poet of the Sierras, Mr. Joaquin Miller, occupies a very uncomfortable position, if we accept literally the account which he gives of his present whereabouts. He is standing somewhere in the neighborhood of Capt. Eads's jetties, and probably up to his middle in mud, interviewing the great Mississippi River:

In orange lands I lean to-day
Against thy warm tremendous mouth,
Oh, tawny lion of the South,
To hear what story you shall say.

Here is one of the conundrums which the Poet propounds to the River:

Oh, tawny river, what of they,
The far North folk? The maiden sweet—
The ardent lover at her feet—
What story of thy States to-day?

We hope that if the Mississippi took the trouble to impart the desired information, its reply was grammatical. The question certainly was not. 'What of they?' is not a permissible form of speech, even in the confidential intercourse of a Poet and a River.—*The New York Sun*.

SOMETHING VERY RARE:—'Ramona' is a Californian story in which the chief characters are half-caste Indians. It is exceedingly well told, and with strong and obvious local coloring. Some of the most striking and dramatic passages in the work are descriptive of the cruel treatment the Indian settlers met with in their expatriation and extermination by the Americans. Miss [sic] Jackson writes very graphically, and the love-story of Ramona and Alessandro is one of the most tender and touching which we have read for a considerable period. It is very rare to meet with a writer who can interest us equally by her narrative and the fidelity with which she depicts the natural scenery amidst which her *dramatis personæ* move.—*The Academy*.

Notes

—THE index which we had hoped to issue to-day did not reach us in time to appear with this number of the paper.

—A volume of the late Bishop Simpson's sermons is in the press of Harper & Bros., who also announce a new cook-book, by Mrs. Henderson, devoted to the preparation of food for invalids.

—Mr. Worthington has in press for immediate publication A. C. Swinburne's new volume, 'A Midsummer Holiday and Other Poems,' 'The Universe of Suns and Other Science Gleanings,' by Prof. R. A. Proctor, and a new and enlarged edition of Cobbett's 'How to Get On in the World.'

—Mr. Stedman's paper on Dr. Holmes in the February *Century* will be illustrated with a full-page portrait of the Autocrat from a daguerreotype taken in early middle life. It looks very much as Dr. Holmes looks to-day, the most marked difference being in the thickness of the hair and the absence of the whiskers that now fringe his cheeks.

—The next paper in the Authors at Home series, now running in these pages, will be an account of the domestic life and literary labors of Mark Twain at Nook Farm, near Hartford. It is written by Mr. Charles H. Clark, of the Hartford *Courant*, and will be the fifth of these interesting sketches.

—A Frenchman, named Guimet, who has been studying Eastern religions for many years, has presented his treasures to the State, and a museum is to be built to contain his collection of objects used in the various creeds, and manuscripts and books on the same theme. M. Guimet has brought over Buddhist and Brahmin priests from all parts of the world, who are translating their sacred books into French, and will form an Oriental School in connection with the museum.

—A facsimile reprint of Dr. Johnson's 'Rasselas,' printed in London by Eliot Stock on the one-hundredth anniversary of the author's death, is imported by Scribner & Welford.

—The London *Times* celebrated its one-hundredth birthday on January 1. It is just sixty-eight days younger than Sir Moses Montefiore—and, we may add, just ninety-six years older than THE CRITIC.

—A correspondent in Boston writes:—'In copying, in your issue of December 27, Mr. Whittier's graceful reply to the school-girls who sent him roses on his birthday, your printer made two blunders so serious that I fear they may be regarded as evidence of failing powers in the venerable, but still mentally vigorous, poet. The last line, as printed, "God bless you, me, and all," was as unlike Whittier as possible. Will you not kindly reprint the lines as copied from the original manuscript, and oblige A Constant Reader?' The corrected words are italicized. The mistakes were in the version from which the compositor set up the lines:

The sun of life is sinking low,
Without is winter's falling snow,
Within your summer roses fall,
The heart of age your offering cheers,
You count in flowers my many years;
God bless you, one and all!

—*The Town* is the name of a new illustrated weekly which, save for the outside cover, is modelled as closely as possible on our satirical contemporary *Life*. The illustrations, the make-up of the pages, even the advertisements, betray a management with *Life* on the brain. It is a close imitation of, but not an improvement upon, its sprightly senior. It is, however, a great deal livelier than its short-lived namesake which came into, and dropped out of, existence a few years since. The Chicago *Rambler* has just appeared in a new dress. In this case, the cover is *Life-like*.

—Mr. N. R. Monachesi, editor of *The American Bookseller*, is hereafter to be the publisher, also, of that journal, which has been issued hitherto by the American News Company.

—*Mutual* is the somewhat indefinite name of the new organ of the Mutual News Company (Limited)—a corporation recently organized in this city by John W. Mackay, James Gordon Bennett, George Jones, and others, and of which George F. Williams is President, Gardiner G. Howland Treasurer, and John F. Cowan Secretary. The capital of the Company is \$500,000, and it is backed by millionaires who declare that it has 'come to stay.' Its organ is a handsomely printed sheet, the first number of which—that for January—is accompanied by a full-page reproduction of the frontispiece of Boughton's 'Sketching Rambles in Holland.'

—The Co-operative Index to Periodicals, which has formed a supplement to *The Library Journal* since March, 1883, is to be printed quarterly, hereafter, instead of monthly. Mr. Fletcher gives the names this month of certain journals which must be assigned to new indexers for the year 1885. THE CRITIC, *Harper's Monthly* and *The Academy* are on this list.

—According to its latest bulletin of new books, showing accessions from April to October, the shelves of the Mercantile Library now hold 204,611 volumes.

—*Every Other Saturday* enters upon its second year with every indication of deserved prosperity.

—In Gen. Grant's paper on Shiloh, in the next number of *The Century*, he tells the story of a narrow escape of himself and two of his staff officers who got within range of the Confederate musketry on the second day of the battle. A ball struck the metal scabbard of the General's sword just below the hilt, and broke it nearly off. Before the battle was over, it had broken off entirely. The illustrations of this paper will be more profuse than those of the other War Papers already

published. Articles in the same number by Col. Johnston, the son of the famous Confederate General, and by Col. Jordan, of Gen. Beauregard's staff, will tell the story of the Confederate side of Shiloh. A letter will be printed from Gen. Fitz John Porter, describing the circumstances of the offer of a high Federal command to General A. S. Johnston, who, at the breaking out of the War, was in charge of the Department of the Pacific. Gen. Porter declares that the assertion that Gen. Johnston intended to turn over to the secessionists the defences of California, or any part of the regular army, is false and absurd.

—'The Peanut Plant: Its Cultivation and Uses,' by B. W. Jones, is in the press of the Orange Judd Co. Another announcement of this house is 'A Dictionary of English Names of Plants.'

—Judge Tourgée has received a letter from Chicago calling his attention to an allusion in *The Chemical News* of Oct. 10 to a book bearing the same name as the Judge's recent work on the Negro Question. The reference is as follows: 'Another offender was Violet, whose name deserves mention, as his work, 'An Appeal to Cæsar,' contains so much curious information as to the export of bullion.' A foot-note shows that this book was published by Thomas Violet, of London, in 1660, Judge Tourgée's striking title having thus been anticipated by over two centuries.

—Mr. F. S. Church has drawn the frontispiece for the February *Harper's*.

—The Rev. Mr. Winslow sends us a letter in answer to our post-note to his communication entitled 'The Egypt Exploration Fund,' in our issue of Dec. 27. In it, he says that Mr. Poole declared Mr. Whitehouse to be unacquainted with Brugsch's 'Dictionnaire Géographique' on the strength of a statement by Mr. Whitehouse in *The Academy* which seemed to indicate a lack of familiarity with that work. Mr. Winslow makes this statement in 'justice to Mr. Poole.' We cannot make room for the letter itself, which is otherwise merely a postscript to that already published, nor can we print any further communications on the subject of Zoan or Tanis from any source.

—Macmillan & Co. have succeeded Mr. Bouton as the American agents of *The Portfolio*.

—Prof. Edward Dowden, of Trinity College, Dublin, author of 'Shakspeare: His Mind and Art,' and 'Southey' in the English Men-of-Letters Series, and the writer of a recent historical and descriptive article on the Irish capital in *The Century*, is said by the Cincinnati correspondent of the Dublin *Freeman's Journal* to be meditating a visit to this country. He would be warmly welcomed, should he come.

—Here is a pendant, from Tennyson's new play, to Mr. Roe's much-mooted story of the ice-bound eagle:

I once was out with Henry in the days
When Henry loved me, and we came upon
A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still
I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she did not stir;
The snow had frozen round her, and she sat
Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold eggs.

—A Robert Browning Calendar, published by the Colegrove Book Co., is arranged with one poem or group of poems as a subject for each month's study. 'Quotations are given which embody the central thought of the poem, and a few hints added concerning other poems which naturally suggest themselves as following out the line of thought. Sometimes a few bits of information are included to help in the proper understanding of circumstances or setting.'

—*The Missionary Review*, of Princeton, N. J., now in its seventh year and volume, has paid expenses from the start, and last year sent \$1,000 in small sums to foreign missions.

—Dissatisfied with the 'inadequate and hideous' catalogue of the Watts collection originally sold at the Metropolitan Museum, a number of public-spirited persons interested in the success of the exhibition have issued a descriptive catalogue prepared by Mrs. E. I. Barrington, who 'is known to artistic and literary London,' we are told, 'as the pupil of Mr. Watts, and more than any other person familiar with his methods and ideas.' The preface contains an interesting account of Titian's manner of painting, as well as of Mr. Watts's, which appears to be an unconscious imitation of that of the great Venetian. The new catalogue is sold, without commission, by Charles Scribner's Sons, Dodd, Mead & Co., G. P. Putnam's Sons, E. P. Dutton & Co., A. D. F. Randolph, G. W. Carleton, White, Stokes & Allen, and George R. Lockwood & Son. Its price is twenty-five cents.

—There is in the United States one daily newspaper to every 10,000 inhabitants. *The Athenaeum* is astonished at this discovery; and well it may be, since in Great Britain and Ireland the proportion is 1 to about 120,000.

—In THE CRITIC of September 6, it was pointed out that Mugwump (or Mugquomp) is an old Indian word, meaning 'great man,' and that Eliot used it in his Indian Bible as an equivalent for 'captain.' *The Saturday Review* of November 22, in an article on 'Mugwumps,' quoted our informant as having decisively settled the moot-question of the origin of the word. And now Mr. Howard Conkling has examined a copy of Eliot's Bible, owned by a direct descendant of the famous missionary, and found the words 'high captains' rendered by the phrase 'ukkechchumukquompumoh.' This is as awkward a mouthful as 'dudeandpharisee!'

—Mr. Hale's 'My Double' is being dramatized.

—Mr. David Douglas, of Edinburgh is about to add Mr. Matthews' and Mr. Bunner's 'In Partnership' to his series of American authors, already in high favor with the British public.

—Mr. Frederic R. Guernsey sends us this note from Boston:—I think that Mr. Howells may be acquitted of perpetrating an anachronism in making one of his characters in 'Silas Lapham' an operator on the type-writer in the year 1875. In the summer of 1874, the manufacturers of a now celebrated type-writing machine announced to the public that they had 'perfected' the instrument, and in the twelve months following a thousand machines were put on the market and sold. In 1875 typewriters were in use among stenographic reporters, and in some business establishments, and, as the great paint manufacturer of Boston was an enterprising person, doubtless he was one of the early purchasers of the new 'perfected' typewriter. I can bear witness to Mr. Howells's photographic descriptions of many places in Boston and in Maine, and I am quite sure he is 'all right' on the type-writer question.

—The January number of *The Cornhill* contains an article on Charles Dickens, written by his eldest daughter, entitled 'Charles Dickens at Home,' with special reference to his relations with children.

—A young French versifier has been foolish enough to name the book containing his first poems 'Dents de Lait.' 'Milk teeth!' exclaims *Le Livre*. 'The title tells it all!' The author judges himself with meritorious impartiality.... When he gets his *wisdom* teeth, if he writes at all, he will certainly write in prose—and he will do well to do so!'

'Mural Literature' is the subject of the leading article in *Le Livre* for November—an account, by Gustave Fustier, of the curious and striking placards displayed on Parisian walls by enterprising publishers. It is rich in illustrations, and gives publicity and permanence to many clever designs which helped the popular success of books which were once famous, though some of them are now forgotten. One of the most respectable of papers, we are told, did not scruple to distribute in the streets of Paris, during the past summer, a card bearing the inscription '13, Rue des Chantres, Au Deuxième Étage. Célérité et Discréption.' Then all the walls were covered with the same suggestive but ambiguous announcement, which proved, after all, to be nothing but the name of a new romance! In the same number of *Le Livre*, 'French Influences in Russia,' particularly the influence of Molière, are interestingly analyzed by Mikhail Achkimasi.

—One of the finest specimens of book-making we have seen from an American house is the edition of John Payne's 'The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night,' published by Mr. R. Worthington. The first volume—the only one yet ready—is printed on Holland hand-made paper, and bound in vellum. It is an exact reprint, made in Philadelphia, of the English folio edition, now out of print, but it is embellished with etchings by Ad. Lalauze which are not in that edition. It will be completed in nine volumes, issued at the rate of one a month. It is not intended for the drawing-room table, but rather for the top shelf of the library book-case, and for the student's, rather than the amateur's, collection. The edition is limited to 500 sets. Mr. John Payne, who has made this literal and unexpurgated translation from the original Arabic, is the translator of Villon's poems, and is a member of the Villon society, for whose edification this translation of the 'Arabian Nights' was made. According to his preface, it is intended as a 'purely literary work, produced with the sole object of supplying the general body of cultivated readers with a fairly representative and characteristic version of the most famous work of narrative fiction in existence.'

The Free Parliament

[Communications must be accompanied with the name and address of the correspondent, not necessarily for publication. Correspondents answering or referring to any question are requested to give the number of the question for convenience of reference.]

QUESTIONS.

No. 860.—Can any one tell me who wrote the following lines, and where they can be found? I am not sure that I quote them correctly.

A dreary place would be this earth
Were there no little children in it;
The song of life would lose its mirth
Were there no children to begin it.

NEW YORK CITY.

A. B. S.

No. 861.—Can some reader of THE CRITIC tell me who wrote a poem, called 'Heliotrope,' commencing

Heliotrope, Flower of the Sun, Flower of the Wedded,
So purple and sweet by my side,
Now are the days—idreamer days—longed for yet dreaded,
When love is no longer a bride;
No longer a bride, Heliotrope, but a deep-seeling wife,
No longer a queen, Heliotrope, but a heart-slave for life,
No longer a girl, Heliotrope, but a full-blooming flower—
Nothing to wish for better than Now, the rich Present's rich hour.

302½ LIVINGSTON ST., BROOKLYN.

LOTTIE E. VANDERVEER.

No. 862.—In your paper, dated Nov. 29, the article on Carlyle, by John Burroughs, has the following (to us) unauthorized words, viz.: 'Torpidities and dispiritments.' Several friends find no authority and therefore challenge their use. By enlightening us you will oblige several readers of THE CRITIC.

PATERSON, N. J.

CHARLES E. MACHERNEY.

[If the use of the words—or rather of the one unusual word, 'dispiritments'—does not justify itself, we fear it will have to go unjustified.]

No. 863.—Can any of your readers tell me where I can find a little poem entitled 'My King?' I think it is intended as a companion piece to the verses 'My Queen'—beginning 'Where and how shall I earhest meet her?'—and is written in a similar style.

PITTSBURG, PA.

J. C. McC., JR.

No. 864.—1. In dedicating a book to any one is it first necessary to ask their permission to do so? 2. What steps should be taken to secure a copyright on a book?

WESTFIELD, MASS.

[1. It is much better to obtain the dedicatee's consent. 2. Send one dollar and a proof-sheet of the title-page to the Librarian of Congress, Washington, with a request that the name of the book be copyrighted, and when the book appears, see that two copies are sent to the same official. The words 'Copyright, 1885' (or whatever the year may be), must be printed on a fly-leaf of the volume, followed by the name of the copyrighter.]

No. 865.—Wanted, the name of the writer of a short religious poem, entitled 'Doe Ye Nexe Thynge,' and beginning with the line From an old English parsonage.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

J. C. W.

No. 866.—Who is the author of the following lines, and in which of his poems are they to be found?

The twilight hours like birds flew by,
As lightly and as free,
Ten thousand stars were in the sky
Ten thousand in the sea;
For every wave with dimpled check
That leaped upon the air
Had caught a star in its embrace
And held it trembling there.

59 CARMINE STREET, NEW YORK.

A STUDENT.

ANSWERS.

No. 752.—All that is left of the edition of 'Mother Goose's Melodies,' made and published by Munroe & Francis, Boston, and afterwards by C. S. Francis & Co., New York, may be found in the book now published under that title by D. S. Knox, 813 Broadway, New York. This is printed from the original stereotype plates, with some so-called modern improvements. It contains all the melodies of Madame Goose, with the wood-cuts designed and engraved for the work by Dr. Alex. Anderson.

NEW YORK CITY.

C. S. F.

No. 785.—Prof. Seeley did not write 'Supernatural Religion,' but a very different book—'Natural Religion.' I do not think the authorship of the former book has yet been made known.

BOSTON, MASS.

E. S. C.

No. 847.—The poem appeared in *The Manhattan* in February last.
FRENCH MOUNTAIN, N. Y.

O. C. AURINGER.

No. 857.—6. The quotation is from Matthew Arnold's sonnet 'To a Friend.'

NEW YORK CITY.

L. D. RAT.

THE EDUCATION OF THE MASSES is of the first importance to society; but how often do children have to grow up in ignorance because the death of the father leaves the mother unable to do more than provide food for them! A very few dollars a year will provide money enough to give all the children a good education in such a case, if the money is used to buy Life Policies in THE TRAVELERS of Hartford, Conn.